

Department of Natural Resources Policy

Subject: Universal Electronic Access Policy

Policy Number: 02:02

Effective Date: July 01, 2001

Approved:

Carol J. Taylor Rogers Date: 8/8/01

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to require that all Maryland Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) websites or web-enabled information or services comply with the Federal Guidelines, known as Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implemented as "The Federal Information Technology Accessibility Initiative (FITAI) and that DNR is universally accessible to all persons including those with disabilities.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all DNR Internet efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

3.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to provide access to information - via the World Wide Web (WWW) to all persons, including those with disabilities.

4.0 GUIDELINES

As a matter of policy, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources also works with the National Federation of the Blind (headquartered in Maryland) to ensure accessibility for people with visual impairments is provided.

The technologies that allow us to design, create and access the WWW are constantly evolving. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international industry consortium of over 300 organizations created to exploit the web to its full potential by developing common protocols to promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has adopted the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure optimal access to its online/internet services, web sites and content. Current guidelines are available at:
<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/>

These Web Content Accessibility Guidelines explain how to make all content more accessible to a wider audience including persons with disabilities, without limiting content developers from using images, video, etc. The Guidelines include: providing alternatives to auditory and visual content; using layouts and style sheets that can

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correctly be interpreted by screen readers and other types of technology; and designing for device independence (e.g., mouse, keyboard, voice, head wand).

DNR web-enabled content and services shall conform to the W3C Guidelines. In addition, each content area must have a contact mechanism to report problems any individual may have in accessing any portion of the site.

In addition, DNR will strive to comply with the 16 Access Board Requirements of the Federal agency responsible to directing accessibility design. The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), or Access Board as it is referred to, is an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act OF 1973 Amendments, the Access Board published proposed standards for electronic and information technology, including web access. States that receive Federal funds under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 are required by that Act to comply with Section 508. These standards seek to assist the states in their efforts to provide broad access to all customers via the Internet. Their recommendations are as follows:

- 1) Provide the equivalent for every non-text element, including both images and animated objects.
- 2) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- 3) Web pages should be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- 4) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- 5) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
- 6) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
- 7) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- 8) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- 9) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- 10) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55Hz.
- 11) A text-only page, with equivalent information for functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.

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- 12) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- 13) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies.
- 14) When electronic forms are designed to be completed online, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- 15) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- 16) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief of Information Technology Service of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in conjunction with the Department's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator shall be responsible for implementing this policy. This responsibility includes regular monitoring and keeping up-to-date on the current status of W3C Guidelines and Federal Access Board Proposed Standards and disseminating them to persons developing and administering web sites and web pages including contractors and sub-contractors.

6.0 REFERENCES

WC3 org Guidelines: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/>

Section 3-401 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Finance and Procurement Article.

National Federation for the Blind, Baltimore, MD: <http://www.nfb.org/>

Federal Access Board <http://www.access-board.gov>

U.S. Department of Justice: <http://usdoj.gov>

Accessible web authoring resources & education center: <http://aware.hwg.org/>

Internet Web Pages: (10NDLR 240) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Public Law 101-336

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Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 508

Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Public Law 105-220; Section 508

Center for Applied Science, Peabody, MA: <http://www.cast.org/bobby>

CAST, Peabody, MA <http://www.CAST.org/Bobby/AboutBobby313.cfm>

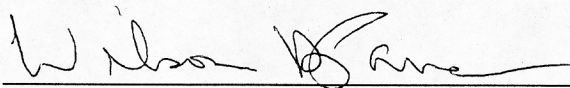
Maryland's Procurement Policy: State Finance and Procurement Article, Sec 3-412
Nonvisual Access Clause

Center for IT Accommodation – Office of Government wide Policy
<http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov/cita/>

Gartner Group Research Report, TU-05-4870, Web Site Accessibility for the Disabled

7.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information on this policy, please contact the Chief of Information Technology Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, 580 Taylor Avenue, D4, Annapolis, MD 21401 at 410-260-8363.



Wilson Parran
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